



# Sour Power Handy Hints

## Spotlight on Tamarind

### What is Tamarind?

Tamarind, (*Tamarindus indica*), evergreen tree of the pea family (Fabaceae), native to tropical Africa & India. It is widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions for its edible fruit, also introduced and found in Northern Australia, the sweet and sour pulp of which is extensively used in foods, beverages, and traditional medicines in many cultures.

The fruit they produce looks like a fat brown bean as long as your hand. Inside, the seeds are surrounded by a dark paste.

The seed pods are split, and the innards are dried and packed into blocks with a date-like texture. This can be cooked, filtered into a liquid paste and sold in jars. Most commercially available tamarind is harvested in India. The paste is rich in tartaric acid and ascorbic acid (vitamin C) that brings a sour fruity punch to foods and drinks across the tropics.



**Did you know?** Australia has an indigenous tamarind also known as Boonjie tamarind. The native tamarind is valued as an indigenous fruit tree because the aril may be eaten raw or added to jams and chutneys. It also is used as the basis for a tangy cool drink.



Indigenous Boonjie tamarind fruit

Source: <https://warndu.com/blogs/first-nations-food-guide/create-a-demand-for-boonjie-tamarind-Traditional-Aboriginal-Food-and-Uses>

### What's the difference between the tamarind products?

Tamarind products come in puree, paste, pulp and powder forms and each one may require a different preparation or quantity used. Be sure to follow the label instructions on the specific product you've bought.

**Tamarind paste** is sometimes called tamarind concentrate and can be purchased in jars. It's often recommended to dilute the paste with a few tablespoons of water as it is the cooked down, intense variety. Not only that, but the thickness and strength of the tamarind paste can differ between brands, so add cautiously and add more as you go. However, it is one of the most convenient variations, providing that hit of sour without any hard work.

**Tamarind puree** is probably the most common form of the fruit found in mainstream supermarkets. Rather than being a jar of intense concentrate, tamarind puree has a much thinner consistency and is usually ready to add to dishes without diluting with water first.

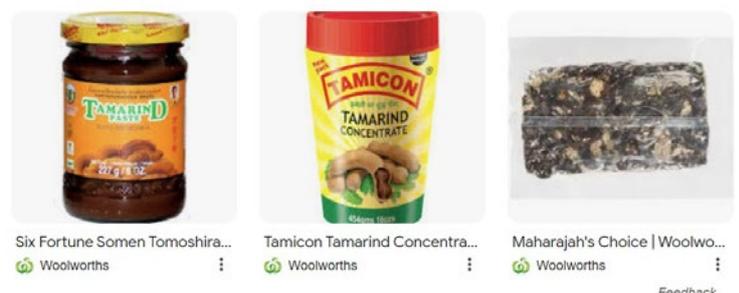
**Tamarind pulp** If you don't mind taking some extra time in the name of authenticity. This product is sold in solid bricks of fruit, complete with seeds and stalks. To use you need to soak a portion of the pulp solid in a little warm water and use your hands to squeeze and soften the fruity pulp. Once you've done that, you'll need to strain out and discard the stalks and pips.

**Tamarind powder** is making more of a mainstream appearance these days. This form isn't as well known as the other types of tamarind. The powder version of the fruit is a sour, almost spicy tasting and is typically added to drinks, snacks, sauces and even lollies.

### Where can you get it?

You can buy paste and puree from the Asian section of most major supermarkets. The pulp and powder versions of the fruit may be a little more difficult to locate, but all Asian grocers should stock this wonder fruit in all its forms.

Due to tamarind's acidity, it does not spoil easily and lasts for six months or longer.



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Feedback

# What is Ceviche?

## The Origins of Ceviche

Ceviche originated in South America, but which country first used this method on raw fish is debatable. It may have been an Incan preparation, where the countries of Peru or Ecuador now exist. It's a staple in all Latin American countries, and each treat it with a slightly different preparation.

At its most basic, ceviche consists of slices or chunks of raw fish or shellfish (or sometimes vegetables) tossed with an acidic marinade, most commonly plain citrus juice, however there are other acidic flavourings. As the pieces of fish sit in the marinade, the citric acid from the juice slowly causes the flesh's proteins to denature, in very much the same way that heating will.

## Ceviche Cooking Technique & Background (Science of Chemical Cooking)

Technically speaking, cooking requires heat, so ceviche isn't cooked. But it's not exactly raw, either. Both heat and citric acid are agents of a chemical process called denaturation.

When you denature a protein, you are destroying its native form. The change is purely structural; no atoms are gained or lost; they are simply rearranged.

In the case of ceviche, lime juice (which has a pH of about 2) denatures the proteins in the fish, freeing the long chains of amino acids from its native form, allowing them to rearrange in a formation that is similar to that of traditionally cooked seafood.

The marinade can be referred to as tigers' milk -Lech de tigre is traditionally made using limes from the north coast of Perú, known as Limón sutil, Peruvian chillies, coriander roots and other ingredients that vary depending on the region and the flavour preferences of the cook.

**It is important to not over marinate the fish in the tiger's milk.** You **may** need to only marinate for a couple of minutes.

Too much time spent in the acid marinade can turn seafood rubbery and tough, so be sure to serve the dish in a timely manner so the fish still looks translucent and vibrant, showcasing the freshness and quality of the seafood selected.

## Ceviche Safety Tips

Ceviche isn't cooked in the true sense (cooking involves heat, and this isn't heated). While an overnight ceviche marinade could help to eliminate potential unsafe bacteria, it is **no replacement** for the impact heat cooking would have, and ultimately over 'cook' the hero protein. The scientists and chefs all agree that **the fresher the fish, the better the dish.**

- Always use the freshest fish possible
- Make the ceviche the same day you purchase the fish
- Until you make the ceviche, store your fish in the refrigerator on ice in a container with a tight lid. If the ice melts, change it out for fresh ice
- Freshly squeezed citrus (such as lemons and limes) ensure the success of this simple recipe. It is the freshness of the ingredients that are the hero. Bottled citrus simply doesn't compare.

## Ceviche Ingredients

To assist in the recipe development of your ceviche, below are some suggested ingredients:

Please note, portions and amounts are to be tested and developed by the chef.

Citrus / sour (cooking) liquids

- Lime
- Lemon
- Orange
- Grapefruit
- Pomelo
- Vinegars rice/ coconut etc

Flavourings

- Mint, Vietnamese, regular etc
- Coriander, leaf and or root
- Chives
- Parsley
- Mint
- Ginger
- Turmeric
- Chilli red/ green
- Salt
- Soy/ dashi
- Mirin
- Sugar

Protein/ Vegetables (can be used on their own or can use a combination of fish and vegetables)

- Fish or seafood: **Choose high-quality fresh or commercially frozen fish and seafood.** Suggestions include: Barramundi, salmon, black, white, or striped sea bass, halibut, flounder, snapper, halibut or mahi-mahi, sole, sea trout, tuna, prawns, squid, scallops, and octopus are all great choices. Be sure to remove any skin before cutting.

Add Thinly Sliced Vegetables to ceviche for flavour, health benefits and texture:

- Mushrooms
- Eggplant
- Skinned tomato
- Cucumber
- Fennel
- Capsicum
- Onion
- Celeriac
- Fresh beetroot
- Poached cauliflower / broccoli
- Fruits
- Avocado

Chef notes:

- Look to different cuisines and the acid and flavourings they use
- Research menus at restaurants such as Peruvian, Philippine, Spanish, Mexican, Japanese and CEVICHERÍA
- Great example of ceviche can be found at <https://www.pastuso.com.au/>

# Suggested teaching ideas

## Idea 1

- Set up a taste testing station with small portions of sour foods or ingredients for students to explore. Example of possible foods are listed in the table below.

Sour Foods	Examples
pickled vegetables	cucumbers, beetroot
citrus fruits	lemons, limes, grapefruits
fermented foods	kim chi, sauerkraut, yoghurt, miso, keffir, buttermilk, sour cream
sour fruits	sour cherries, Granny smith apples, cranberries
vinegars	white, apple cider, red wine, Balsamic
acid dressings	vinaigrettes

- Encourage students to use all their senses to observe and record the colours, textures and aromas as well as taste the sourness. Ask students to describe their experiences and share their thoughts with the class.
- Introduce culinary vocabulary related to sour flavours. Ask students to create a list of words to describe the colours, texture, aromas and tastes of these foods or ingredients.

## Idea 2

Discuss the cultural origins of sour dishes. For example, explore the history and traditions associated with sauerkraut in different cuisines. Use the following questions to guide student research.

- Where is the earliest documented evidence of sauerkraut consumption, and what cultures are believed to have first fermented cabbage?
- How did the practice of making and consuming sauerkraut spread across different regions?
- Investigate the historical significance of sauerkraut, especially during periods when access to fresh vegetables was limited. How did sauerkraut contribute to the preservation of cabbage and its use as a source of nutrients, particularly vitamin C, during times like winter or long sea voyages?

- Explore the role of sauerkraut in European cultures, particularly in German cuisine. How did the dish become a part of the culinary traditions of different regions, and what impact did migration and cultural exchange have on its popularity in various parts of the world, including Australia?

## Idea 3

Explore the significance of ceviche in Latin American cultures.

- What role does ceviche play in the culinary traditions and social gatherings of Latin American cultures?
- How has the preparation and consumption of ceviche become intertwined with cultural practices and celebrations in countries like Peru, Ecuador, and Mexico?
- Explore the historical context of how ceviche might have been introduced to Australia. Were there specific cultural exchanges or historical events that facilitated the integration of ceviche into Australian cuisine?
- How do Australian consumers perceive ceviche, and has there been a shift in attitudes towards raw fish and seafood in Australian cuisine? Have there been challenges in introducing a dish like ceviche to a new culinary context?

## Idea 4

- Discuss the basic components of a vinaigrette and provide students with ingredients for a basic vinaigrette (e.g., olive oil, vinegar or lemon juice, Dijon mustard, garlic, salt, and pepper), along with various herbs and spices for flavour customisation.
- As a class, discuss the role of each ingredient and how variations can be made to suit personal preferences.
- Encourage students to explore the art of flavour balancing in culinary preparations by making their own vinaigrettes, and emphasise the importance of experimentation with herbs and spices to customise flavours.
- Get students to make a simple salad using their vinaigrette.

## Idea 5

Discuss the cultural significance of vinaigrettes in different cuisines. Split the class up into small groups to report back how vinaigrettes are used in the following cuisines: French, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Middle East, Mexican, Canadian etc. You could make the vinaigrettes associated with each cuisine and compare the ingredients used in each.

## Idea 6

Visit a supermarket (actual or online) to explore sour ingredients and foods available. Ask students to present their findings in a graphic organiser such as a table or mind map.

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